

MARZENA DIAKUN

Conductor



- *What is your favourite repertoire?*

The answer to this question cannot be simple; it depends on the musical discoveries of the moment. There are composers such as Bruckner or Mahler, who will always be with me, and some whose symphonies I don't think I will conduct more than a few. Having said that, when I am given pieces I would not necessarily choose, it makes me realise that I would have actually missed something which can influence my position on the very piece. To come back to your question, my favourite repertoire is the late 19th/early 20th century, big, post-romantic orchestral works from the Russian, French, and particularly German schools. However, I have recently been listening to solo piano and Bach with great interest.

- *What are the most important musical values for you?*

To play music is to convey a whole range of emotions to the listeners and/or communicate with the audience through these emotions. Working with an orchestra, together with the musicians, on getting the means to do exactly that is the essence of my work. The way to achieve this is rich in experiences based on collaboration, respect and desire to share the same goal to perfection in the sound and phrase, all this in order to get closer to the ideal, which one may call "beauty".

- *You conducted both the Orchestre de Chambre de Paris and the Maîtrise de Notre-Dame at the Notre-Dame Cathedral recently; could you talk about these two concerts?*

The concerts consisted of a programme that included pieces from Bach, Pärt and Stravinsky, which I conducted in the Cathedral. This was an amazing experience thanks to the spiritual atmosphere there. As for the music, one can only be fascinated by all the music we performed, enhanced by the depth of the texts. These works can't help but touch us profoundly.

- *Is conducting with a choir different from an orchestra alone?*

The distinctive difference is the text, which gives a particular meaning to the music. The work is different and implies diversity of interpretation, sometimes from a technical point of view. For example, the conductor has to pay particular attention to the balance between the choir and the orchestra, as well as the tempo so that the singers can breathe!

- *You will be conducting the Orchestre Padeloup at the Salle Gaveau in Paris on Friday 17 November with a whole Polish or Polish-related repertoire. What does conducting Polish music mean to you?*

This concert celebrates the centenary of Poland's independence. The programme, comprising Polish composers from diverse eras and aesthetics, such as Grażyna Bacewicz, Frédéric Chopin and Elżbieta Sikora, will be completed by Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 3, which was first called the "*Polish Symphony*" by conductor August Manns - maybe because of the *Tempo di Polacca* finale. As for the

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other composers: Elżbieta Sikora is Polish and shares her time between Poland and France, and Grażyna Bacewicz (1909-1969) was a very famous composer and violinist in Poland. She wrote seven violin concertos, which are real masterpieces to me.

- How do you approach contemporary repertoire?

I have had a very close collaboration with the Spanish 'Smash Ensemble', with which I have conducted a number of premieres. I enjoy seeking out what the composer wants to express through his writings. For me, it is essential to reveal the structure of the piece and find the underlying meaning through all the notes, which I bring together with the musicians. Some of the scores immediately speak to me, others are a bit more difficult to get close to. My role as a conductor/musician is to interpret all scores; history will choose the best.

- According to you, what's the best solution to find the audience of tomorrow?

A great education is key. It is important to open the eyes and ears of young people, enhancing their curiosity and, most importantly, offering the best quality of interpretation. All this would be a good start to exchange with the younger generation.

- What is your dream career-wise - the criteria which will make you feel that your career has been successful?

I would like to never stop progressing. The specificity of my job is my instrument, i.e. the orchestra, which I need to bring to the best level. My dream is to conduct the great repertoire with the best orchestras in the world, in Great Britain, Germany, and the United States. My career will only be successful if musical interpretation gives me the same satisfaction and pleasure as ever.